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25X1

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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the USSR - Eastern Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

CONTENTS

October 2, 1975

Moscow's Commentary on China's National Day	1
Soviets Chastise Western Allies on Berlin.	2
<i>Pravda</i> Says Soviet Philosophers Lag Behind Today's Tasks	3
East-West Germany Reach Tentative Agreement in Transit Talks	6

Moscow's Commentary on China's National Day

Moscow's treatment of Chinese National Day has followed the pattern of recent years. The Soviet government, but not the party, sent standard felicitations to the Chinese, and the same Soviet officials turned up at the Chinese reception in Moscow as attended last year. *Pravda* and *Izvestia* carried press commentaries strongly criticizing the Chinese and Mao, but also expressed the usual sentiments that one day relations between the two countries will get better.

The national day coverage fails to convey any new sense of direction or imperative to Moscow's polemical campaign against China that began in a long article in the mid-August issue of the party's theoretical journal *Kommunist*. The article is essentially a rehash of this year's Soviet criticism of Maoist domestic and foreign policies.

Subsequent Soviet commentary on the *Water Margin* issue has betrayed Moscow's interest in what it regards as evidence of politicking and perhaps even pro-Soviet sentiment in China. The head of the Chinese desk in the Institute of Oriental Studies recently went so far as to publicly, and explicitly, assert that there seem to be pro-Soviet forces in China who are arguing for a change in China's foreign policy.

25X1

October 2, 1975

-1-

Soviets Chastise Western Allies on Berlin

The Soviets took an unusual swipe at the three Western signatories of the Berlin agreement in a *Pravda* article on October 1. They charged that the Western powers had failed to reply to a Soviet protest and had displayed an unseemly readiness to "run to the aid" of West German and West Berlin officials who engage in activities that violate the Berlin agreement.

Pravda was taking exception to a meeting of West German state interior ministers that was held in West Berlin on September 19. The Soviets argued that the meeting was in "direct contradiction" to the part of the Berlin agreement stating West Berlin is not a constituent part of West Germany. The Soviets have routinely criticized West German actions in West Berlin, but usually they exempt the three Western powers from their protests.

The Soviets may have made an exception this time because the three Western powers responded to their official protest only through an oral statement by a French political adviser. The Soviets may be concerned that this procedure will become the standard way for the West to respond to Soviet complaints rather than the previous prolonged diplomatic interchange.

The publication of the Soviet article was probably delayed until West German opposition leader Helmut Kohl had left Moscow. The Soviets would not want to further antagonize Kohl, who had already reacted strongly to a *Pravda* commentary criticizing West German Christian Social Union leader Franz Josef Strauss. The Soviets nevertheless wanted to make it clear to the West Germans that there had been no change in their attitude toward Berlin issues.

25X1

October 2, 1975

-2-

CONFIDENTIAL

Pravda Says Soviet Philosophers
Lag Behind Today's Tasks

A *Pravda* editorial article on September 19 criticizes the state of affairs in Soviet philosophy and particularly the work of the Institute of Philosophy. Summarizing the "substantial shortcomings" of the philosophers, *Pravda* cites the poor work being done both on cardinal problems of dialectical and historical materialism and on questions arising from contemporary social developments. Its statement that the "Central Committee has specified the main direction of the Institute of Philosophy's activity" suggests that a party resolution may have been issued on the subject.

In its instructions and criticisms, the article seems to seek a balance between the positions of liberals and conservatives in the fields of ideology and social science. These two factions have for years been fighting a seesaw battle, with the conservatives generally coming out ahead in the end. Against this background, the *Pravda* declaration is a plus for progressives.

On the Liberal Side

Pravda accepts the fact that socially oriented disciplines have "become relatively more independent" of the study of historical materialism and that, indeed, "the sphere of concrete sociological research has 'split off'." The importance of these disciplines is recognized in the call for more creative research, especially on real problems of social development. Conservatives are the main target of the article's condemnation of people who claim a monopoly of wisdom, manifest "cliquishness," and engage in "groundlessly scathing" criticism, which freezes thought and is useful only for incompetents.

October 2, 1975

On the Conservative Side

Pravda reaffirms the role of dialectical materialism as the theoretical and methodological foundation of philosophy and all sciences. It suggests that "a certain outflow of specialists to the more concrete sectors of sociological knowledge" has unjustifiably weakened work on general problems of historical materialism. "Ideological and methodological spinelessness and the erosion of principles" are, of course, condemned.

The main purpose of the article, however, is not to expound on the dangers of specialists straying from ideological principles. Rather, it is to place responsibility on the developers of dialectical and historical materialism to incorporate the newer disciplines in the universal system of knowledge and thus to legitimize them and make them usable. According to *Pravda*, "the party directs Soviet philosophers to prepare conceptual works developing historical materialism as both a general sociological theory and social philosophical knowledge."

Three organizational tasks are set for philosophers: 1) To increase the proportion of fundamental research, which uncovers new patterns and trends and generalizes theoretical and factual material accumulated by science. (Among other things, this requires preliminary experimental research, the advance of promising ideas, and analysis of world literature.) 2) To pool the efforts of scientists with different specialities. 3) To improve research linked with the practice of administering society, that is, the "study of the real forms and trends of social development and the forecasting of the consequences of a particular measure."

October 2, 1975

The article in *Pravda* clearly springs from the party's perception of sterility in the ideological sphere and of the need to utilize modern advances in social sciences in the governing of a more mature society. The issuance of such a programmatic statement, after years of vacillation, may have been triggered by the approaching party congress next February. Need for modernization in the social sciences has undoubtedly been brought home by the present effort to formulate economic and social development plans for 1976-80 and 1976-90.

On the other hand, the party does not have in mind a revolution in the social sciences, and the *Pravda* article does not appear definitive enough to still the battle between conservatives and progressives. The statement does suggest that the latter's influence and opportunities will expand somewhat and that some new steps will be tried, such as the recent opening of a management school for undergraduates in Moscow. *Pravda's* comment on the necessity of correctly selecting leaders and staffs for the outlined tasks suggests some personnel changes are in store, but the turnover may be no greater than that which has accompanied the disputes and infighting in the field in recent years.

The fact that no Soviets attended a conference of Warsaw Pact ideologists and philosophers at Wisla, Poland, September 23-29, has been cited as evidence of the unsettling effect of the *Pravda* article on Soviet philosophers. This may or may not be true. We have yet to receive reports on the personal reactions of social scientists in Moscow.

25X1



October 2, 1975

East-West Germany Reach Tentative
Agreement in Transit Talks

The US embassy in East Berlin reports that Bonn and East Berlin reached a tentative agreement on Berlin transit route negotiations during their recent bilateral talks. The Federal Republic will increase its annual lump-sum payment for transit route usage, while East Germany has reportedly agreed to improve rail and road connections to and from Berlin. The annual transit payment includes visa fees, road-use taxes, and vehicle taxes that the West Germans pay East Germany for overland travel to Berlin.

Guenter Gaus, the West German representative in East Berlin, is currently negotiating details of a tentative agreement on the payment issue reached by special representatives of the two Germanies at Helsinki. Both sides had reportedly agreed that the annual lump sum payment was to be increased to 400 million marks. The present annual payment of 234.9 million marks was established in December 1971.

Partial information on the results of these negotiations has already been made public. Hamburg radio of September 30th also carried a brief statement by Gaus announcing that East Germany had indicated, for the first time, that it would pay part of the costs for expansion of transit roads to and from Berlin. He also said that estimates for various planned traffic improvements and the proportions of these costs had been discussed.

A possible snag in the negotiations may arise over the Teltow Canal. West Berlin officials are to meet in East Berlin next week to begin negotiations and to "conclude necessary agreements." An East German Foreign Office official recently stated

October 2, 1975

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

that East Germany could not accept the Federal Republic as a negotiating partner on the canal issue. During his meeting on September 30, Gaus was expected to inform the East Germans that Bonn was the primary negotiator for the canal and that West Berlin would handle only "technical aspects." The chances are that while the West Berlin Senat may open the talks, the Federal Republic will enter the picture after a compromise with the East Germans is reached.

25X1

25X1



October 2, 1975

-7-

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~